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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 30 July 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest incidents in the ongoing campaign of Palestinian terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

At approximately 1 p.m. (local time) today, a suicide bomber entered a popular falafel stand on a busy street in downtown Jerusalem, detonating his explosives amongst diners. Seven civilians were wounded in the attack. It was only due to the fact that the explosive device detonated prematurely that the cost in human suffering was not greater. The bomber was identified as Majed Atta from Beit Jalla, aged 17, and a member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, part of Chairman Arafat's own Fatah movement, which claimed responsibility for the attack.

Earlier in the day, two brothers, Shlomo and Mordechai Odesar, were shot and killed at close range by masked Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank village of Jammai'n. The brothers, truck-drivers by profession, had come to the village to supply fuel to a local cement factory. Again, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade of Chairman Arafat's Fatah movement claimed responsibility for the attack.

Also today, at 3 a.m. (local time), a Palestinian terrorist infiltrated the community of Itamar, stabbing and seriously wounding a husband and wife while they slept in their bed. This attack comes a month and a half after the previous infiltration into Itamar, during which Palestinian terrorists killed five civilians, including a mother and her three young sons.

This list of grave terrorist attacks, perpetrated in a single day, would have been longer were it not for the efforts of Israeli security forces. In the past week alone, 12 attempted terrorist attacks have been thwarted, including several suicide bombers who have been apprehended en route to civilian areas in Israel.

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The fact that Chairman Arafat's own Fatah movement continues to perpetrate and support acts of terrorism against innocent civilians should disabuse anyone of the notion that there is any genuine attempt by the current Palestinian leadership to bring an end to the ongoing Palestinian terrorist campaign. Condemnations issued to placate international audiences cannot obscure the fact that the Palestinian Authority, and its 40,000 strong police force, have failed to take any genuine measures against Palestinian terrorist groups freely operating in its territory. Known terrorist operatives continue to be granted safe harbour and free movement; illegal weapons have not been confiscated; and incitement to hatred and violence, including the glorification of suicide attacks against Israeli men, women and children, continues unabated.

It is the abject refusal of the Palestinian Authority to live up to its legal and moral obligations to end terrorism and incitement that have compelled Israel to take defensive measures to protect its civilians from gruesome daily attacks. If the Palestinian leadership were to join international efforts to comprehensively root out terrorism, rather than condone and support such acts, Israeli measures would be unnecessary.

The international community has affirmed that acts of terrorism directed at innocent civilians can never be justified and pose a serious threat to international peace and security. It is high time that the Palestinian Authority was held accountable for its involvement in these heinous crimes, which have devastating repercussions for both Israelis and Palestinians. It is the endless wave of brutal Palestinian terrorist attacks against innocent civilians, conducted with the support of the current Palestinian leadership, which undermines any prospects at a genuine dialogue aimed at achieving peace and security for both peoples.

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, as well as under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aaron **Jacob**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.